

For Crown and Country

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For Crown and Country

by [xpityx](#)

Summary

James stood to stretch, but froze instead: Sparrow was awake and watching him through slitted eyes.

He realised abruptly that he hadn't considered this eventuality. He had been resigned to his role as carer for an unconscious man, and thought perhaps that the Turners would be present to deal with the difficulties of the conscious version.

Notes

Disclaimer: Although this is a story about two fictional characters, I feel it necessary to say that by writing and publishing this I am in no way endorsing or excusing the violence of the actor who plays Jack Sparrow.

Chapter 1

James Norrington made his way up the gravelled path to the Turners' small townhouse. It was set a little way back from the street at the south end of Rosedale, but close enough to the sea to hear the sound of the tide pulling at the shore. It had been entitled to Elizabeth as a dowry upon the death of her father, but of course the vast majority of his wealth had passed to a distant cousin as the closest male heir. The Turners themselves would be almost to England by now, having been invited by old family friends of the Governor for an extended stay. William had seemed a little less enthusiastic than his wife about the venture, and James had struggled to find a way to tell the younger man that although no-one would find his manners lacking, without relevant relations he would be very politely excluded from most company. Which, in James' experience, was often a blessing: it was difficult to disappoint those who expected nothing of you.

It was late enough that he carried a lantern, having forgotten the time as he sat in his office studying the near illegible script of the *Devonshire's* quartermaster. His steward had thinned his lips but made no comment when James had elected to walk the short journey to his office that morning. He was sure his staff thought him an oddity, travelling here and there on foot as if he were not a gentleman of some standing, but he found he had less and less need to keep up appearances.

Before she left, Elizabeth had been most distraught at the disappearance of Hector, a small calico kitten that William had rescued from the shore some two months ago. James had therefore agreed not only to check up on their home as and when he was able, but also to keep an eye out for the missing animal.

The front doors and shutters were locked up tight when James rattled them. Although it was a little late to be wandering around in Port Royal's alleys, he walked around the house to make sure that the back was equally undisturbed. Mrs Turner had furnished James with a full set of keys, so he let himself through the side gate and into the dark of the walled garden.

It was now near 10 o'clock at night and he had forgotten to take lunch again, so of course it should follow that one of the shutters on the kitchen window was loose, and the window itself had been smashed. It was only a small hole, just enough to put one's arm through to unlatch it. He briefly entertained the idea of fetching a Night Watchman but he had both his pistol and sword and, even if there was anyone within, it was doubtful that they could match him at either.

He let himself in though the back parlour door, locking it carefully behind him, then made his way from room to room. All seemed well downstairs, so he stopped at the bottom of the narrow staircase that lead to the next floor and debated the relative need to check upstairs against the intrusion into his friends' privacy it would be.

He experimentally put a foot on the bottom stair and when Elizabeth did not immediately appear out of thin air to scold him, started to ascend. A familiar smell pulled at him as he reached the top step: sweet, but unpleasantly so. Like rotten fruit on a long voyage: half mouthwatering and half repulsive.

He checked the guest quarters, water closet, and finally stood outside the master bedchamber, where the smell was decidedly strongest. He took his pistol in one hand, sent up a brief prayer that he was not about to find the rotting body of a kitten on the Turners' bed, and slowly opened the door.

He stood for a moment in the doorway as if struck dumb, pistol dangling from his hand and breath caught in his throat: *it couldn't be*. He was not sure if he meant that the pale, motionless figure on the bed could not possibly be Jack Sparrow, or that he could not possibly be dead.

He shook himself a little and re-holstered his pistol before creeping forward, as if the man were merely sleeping and not deathly still.

His heart beat a quick tattoo against his breast as he reached out and laid a hand on the other man's neck before jerking back. He was hot, burning up in fact, and from this close he could see that Sparrow was taking fast shallow breaths. The sheets under his back were stiff with pus and blood.

He took a step back and sat down heavily on the chair under the window, leaving the lamp on the floor beside him.

James Norrington considered himself a moral man: he was loyal to crown and country, but he also understood that on occasion one must do as God willed and set aside immediate, earthly concerns. He had let Elizabeth and her crew go free in the name of that greater good, and to rectify the wrongs wrought against her and her father. Although there had been no solid evidence against him he had been demoted to Captain, which had been a far more lenient punishment than he thought he deserved.

His duty was clear: the dying man in front of him had committed so many crimes that to *not* turn him in would be an act of treason itself. And yet, and yet...

A part of him wished to lock up the house and leave Sparrow to his fever and sickly wounds, but that was the coward's way out. He briefly leant forward and put his head in his hands, allowing himself a moment of terrible resignation, before getting up to do what must be done.

~

The nearest water pump was shared by the row and only a short walk away. The streets were deserted this far from the dock, so he was able to carry half a bucket of water back to the townhouse undetected. The water was warm, of course, but there was nothing to be done about that: everything in Port Royal was either warm, hot, or murderously hot.

There was wine in the cellar and clean linens in the cupboards. He mixed the wine and water in a bowl, and then drew a cup of water and set it on the side in the most likely vain hope that Sparrow would wake to drink it.

He had expected that manoeuvring Sparrow out his clothing would rouse him at least a little, but he didn't so much as twitch. The only thing he left was his shirt as it was stuck fast. He went about soaking the whole mess in water, easing the shirt away from skin in small increments. Despite his care, pus and blood flowed freely, and he grimly noted that Sparrow owed the Turners new bedding at the very least. Finally the shirt came free and he was able to see the damage clearly for the first time: four deep lash marks, swollen with ill humours.

He washed them out with the wine and water, and cut into them until the blood ran clean. He knew he should bleed the wound some more, but he had watched too many men fade away under the tender mercies of a ship doctor to see Sparrow lose any more blood, ill humours or not.

Finally, he changed the bedding and washed down the rest of Sparrow as well as he was able to, checking him for lice and fleas as he went, which he was remarkably free of. He dripped a small amount of water into Sparrow's open mouth and was temporally heartened to see him swallow, until he remembered that a living pirate captain would cause him a lot more trouble than a dead one.

And with that uncharitable thought, he took his leave, locking the house behind him.

~

For the next three days he visited the Turner house and its unwelcome guest: washing Sparrow's wounds and feeding him water drop by drop. He rehung the shutter and arranged for a glassmaker to replace the broken window pane. Thankfully, no-one questioned his right to be in the Turner house, and the young constable who came to see about the possible break in took James at his word and did not ask to enter.

He had bought a little laudanum but as long as Sparrow remained stubbornly unconscious there was no need for it. He had taken to going home and eating supper first, then waiting for his servants to leave for the night before walking through the deserted streets to the Turners'.

On Saturday evening his schedule finally caught up with him, and he fell asleep in the chair under the window only to awaken with a start just as the sun had begun to feather the sky. He pushed a hand through his hair, he would have to get back to his house before the street began to wake.

He stood to stretch, but froze instead: Sparrow was awake and watching him through slitted eyes.

He realised abruptly that he hadn't considered this eventuality. He had been resigned to his role as carer for an unconscious man, and thought perhaps that the Turners would be present to deal with the difficulties of the conscious version. Which was preposterous, of course, the Turners had been gone only three weeks on a trip that may take three months.

He gathered himself as best he could under the circumstances.

“Welcome back, Captain Sparrow, I had not expected you to wake so soon.”

Sparrow licked his lips, but no sound came out. James was aware that his cheeks had started to heat at the forced intimacy ahead, but there was nothing for it. He sat on the side of the bed and avoided Sparrow's eyes as he got an arm around him and supported him to sit upright, propping him up with pillows, and then brought the cup to his lips so he could drink. Sparrow swallowed eagerly, and James found himself saying *steady, steady* quietly, as he would to a sailor under his care. He looked up and caught Sparrow's eye briefly before looking away.

When Sparrow had drunk his fill he eased him back onto his side, picked up his jacket and addressed the wall above Sparrow's head.

“I have things I have to attend to but I will be back after dark.”

He strode out of the room before he could discover if the pirate was fit to reply.

When he returned that evening he was determined to remain in control of the situation. He had spent the morning sermon lamenting his own stupidity, and had scowled so fiercely after the service that for once he had been able to escape the church grounds without being invited to a game of cards, asked to dinner, or introduced to anyone's daughter.

He carried a small pot of plain porridge, which he had made himself and therefore was only slightly burnt, and the laudanum so at the very least he could drug Sparrow into quietude. But when he arrived Sparrow was asleep on his side, snoring softly. He went to check his fever as usual, putting the back of his hand across Sparrow's brow and noting that his fever had lessened. Of course, Sparrow chose that moment to wake up, jerking back from James' hand and then moaning through gritted teeth as he jostled his wounds.

“Be careful!” James snapped.

Sparrow looked up at him, eyes comically widened, as James got a hold of himself.

“My apologies, but I did not spend three days washing pus from your wounds for you to undo it all.” He scolded. “Would you like some water?” He added in what he hoped was a slightly less accusatory tone.

Sparrow's eyes darted to the door and then back again, but as he was currently wearing only his smallclothes and couldn't sit up without help, James was sure he would be staying put for the moment at least.

“Rum?” he croaked.

James sighed again and bent to help him sit up.

~

“There is also the danger of Mrs Turner leading a mutiny against the poor captain, taking over a battalion of ships, and sailing the high seas as an admiral without peer for the next three decades, so that is something to take into consideration.”

Sparrow turned a disbelieving look at him from his place on the bed, then shouted a laugh.

“So you do have a sense of humour after all, eh? I'd always thought your pigtail was braided so tight it might've squeezed all the fun out of you.”

James narrowed his eyes, “I was being perfectly serious.”

Sparrow was improving by leaps and bounds, and had progressed to being able to converse for more than five minutes at a time some days ago. James, when he made himself think about it, was a little ashamed at how much he was enjoying the company.

They drank in silence for a moment, James his wine and Sparrow the watered down version he'd finally pestered him into providing.

“You're going to have to let me go at some point, Commodore.”

James gritted his teeth at the title, “And what makes you so sure that I'm not sure fattening you up for the slaughter?”

Sparrow looked at him with something like pity, “Because you're a good man, Captain James Norrington.” And he raised his glass at James then tossed back the rest of his weak wine.

James studied his own glass, unable to even say what he was thinking in response to such a statement.

“Any chance of something stronger than this? I'd get drunker licking a sailor.” Sparrow was holding his empty cup out imperiously, and shook it a little when James looked at him.

“No. Two weeks ago you nearly died. Even if I *had* any rum, I would not be giving any to you.”

“No rum? Dishonesty and falsehood, you're a Navy man: you must have barrels of the stuff.” Sparrow then proceed to make as if he was going to get up, before grimacing with pain and slumping back again.

James wondered at himself, to think he had been looking forward to finishing his correspondence this evening so that he could hasten to the Turners. He had not been able to get the story of the injuries from Sparrow, who had a tendency to claim lightheadedness when asked difficult questions, and the man was right in that his increasing wellness put James in an impossible position.

It was something to think on later. Right now Sparrow could barely stand long enough to piss, let alone cause any mischief.

~

James was as flummoxed by the lack of the man as he had been by his sudden appearance. When he had left Sparrow last night he had been obviously weary but trying to hide it, telling tale after tall tale until he had begun to droop and James had bid him good night.

He turned in a circle, as if the movement would somehow conjure Sparrow from wherever he had disappeared to.

Baffled, James checked the wardrobe and under the bed, where there was nothing but a little dust and a folded note written on what looked like Elisabeth's best writing paper.

Dear Captain James Lawrence Norrington,

Thank you most kindly for your care, your conversation, and for the 3 shillings and 12 pence that happened to be in your coat pocket last week.

A wise man once said, 'gratitude is the greatest of virtues', but I wager it is knowing when one has worn out their welcome.

So it is with great sadness that I bid you adieu.

Yours,

Captain Jack Sparrow

Upon finishing he felt almost sick with relief, then hated himself for it in the next instant. Cowardly, to be so pleased to have avoided such a terrible decision. He had no doubt that he would have handed over Sparrow to the authorities once he had been well enough to stand trial: it had been the only possible conclusion to the situation.

Sparrow had left the room that had been his sickroom for nearly three weeks almost presentable. Nevertheless, James tidied and straightened until he could be sure that the Turners would be none-the-wiser upon their return. He had not immediately turned the pirate in because Jack Sparrow should at least be done the courtesy of being allowed to face his fate on his feet. However there was a marked difference between the admiration for a skilled sailor that the Turners undoubtedly felt and tending to a wanted criminal, in their house no less. It was done now, however, and there was nothing for it but to turn his full attention back to Port Royal and to put this strange interlude out of mind.

It took him a week before it occurred to him to wonder how Sparrow had learnt his full name.

~

Mrs Turner was singularly adept at giving the impression of having rolled her eyes without having actually done so.

“You use the word ‘fine’ as most would a citadel wall, as a barring of the way.”

“I am fine, I am very well if you must. I have managed to dine at the Willington’s twice without being locked in a room with their eldest daughter, and I have not had the Captain of the *Berwick* court martialled for sheer stupidity. Does that answer satisfy you?” He had quickly learnt that Elizabeth was immune to his ill tempers, and took his occasional sarcasm in her stride. A more forthright woman he was yet to meet, and he was glad they had become friends.

He tried to limit his visits to once a fortnight, despite the Turners’ assurance that he was welcome anytime. He was aware that his friendship with his previous love and her husband looked odd from the outside, but it had ended up being the one bright spot in an otherwise dismal end to his run as Commodore. Elizabeth Turner could hold her own in any conversational topic he cared to introduce, and William Turner was particularly skilled at impersonating certain, more absurd members of what passed for Port Royal society, which he could be convinced to do after a glass or

two of wine. James reflected occasionally that the only times he really laughed was within these four walls. Even with just Jack here it had been something, something other than the endless trek between home and office and home and church and then back again.

“James?” Elizabeth asked.

He shook himself and reached for the question he had just been asked.

“My apologies. Yes, we set sail for St Kitts in a week’s time. It is only a short cruise, so I will be back within the month.”

Elizabeth was still looking at him in concern, but her husband saved him from further questioning.

“Don’t tell me you will have Johnson as cook?”

James groaned theatrically and Elizabeth hid a smile, “Oh, do not remind me. Did I tell you of the time he dropped a measure of salt in the rum rations? I thought the crew were going to tie him to the barrel and set it alight.”

He stayed past what was a reasonable time that night, glad in the company of friends.

~

There was a movement in the corner of his eye that in his exhaustion he put down to the drapes blowing in the draft, but then he remembered where he was and that Captain’s quarters did not come with such niceties. He looked up.

The lack of drapes made it easy to see Jack Sparrow perched on the port ledge, like some great, unwashed gargoyle. It had been some four months since he had slipped from Port Royal, leaving nothing but a note. He looked well, James observed, under the dirt.

He opened his mouth, closed it, then decided to accept that Sparrow had somehow crept onto a ship of 80 men and move on.

“Good evening.” he offered, “You do realise there's a price on your head?”

Sparrow leapt from the ledge and landed sure footed on the deck, took off his hat and offered a grinning bow. James frowned, what was the point in saving the man from his wounds if he was determined to meet the hangman's noose? He shied away from the thought that he had planned to hand over the pirate himself and went to double check he'd secured the door.

“It's good and locked already.” Jack advised, from where he was investigating the papers on the desk.

“And how long have you been spying on me?”

“Not as long as you watched me sleep in Port Royal, I reckon.” The pirate had the audacity to add a wink.

“That was- it was- you were dying!” James could feel heat creep into his cheeks and there was little he could do to stop it, to think that he had occasionally found himself lonesome after Sparrow's departure.

“I brought you a gift.” Jack continued, flourishing a paper-wrapped shape.

He handed it over, and James unwrapped it to discover a jug of French brandy. He felt his eyebrows raise - it was a gift worthy of a King along these rum drenched shores.

“Well? You going to offer me a glass? It's only gentlemanly, after all.” Jack had his boots up on his desk and was leaning his best chair back rather alarmingly.

James swatted at his boots as he went to fetch two tumblers and poured them out a good measure. The smell took him back to the smoking rooms of London: cool climes and a rolling fog that dulled the stink of the streets.

He sat and toasted Sparrow who returned the gesture in silence. They had spoken easily in Port Royal by the end, talking of ships they had sailed on and good men they had known, but now James was uneasy. This was not a fever-ridden invalid, reliant on his good will and support; this

was one of the most dangerous pirates in the Caribbean and an enemy of the crown.

“What?” Sparrow flashed his golden grin, “No pleasantries for your old friend Jack then? When I went to all this effort to steal you good brandy, find your ship, and ease your loneliness a little on this fine evening?”

“We are not friends.”

Sparrow snorted, “Often place gentle hands on the poor fevered skin of your enemies, do you mate?”

James ignored the question stood to get them more brandy.

“Show me the scars.” He said as he poured.

“What? What right do you think you have to me flesh?”

When James dared to look up Sparrow didn't look horrified, which was something, at least. “You're correct, I saw to your wounds and now I am entitled to see how they've healed.”

Sparrow snorted, “You British, you touch something with your greasy mitts and all of a sudden you've raised a flag and named it owned.” But he started to unfasten his waistcoat and shirt, much to James' relief, as he couldn't have explained himself any further.

Sparrow turned as he pulled his shirt over his shoulders, dragged his chair closer and straddled it.

James swallowed the rest of his liquor down before he could make himself look.

The scars were raised red welts that crossed Jack's skin with startling violence, twisting into ragged knots. He ghosted his fingers over one and Jack shuddered.

“Are they tight?” He asked softly, not understanding the sudden quiet of the moment but not wishing to break it.

Jack shrugged slightly. "A little," he admitted.

James put a hand on his shoulder to keep him in place and leant over the desk for his pomade. The smell of cloves filled the air as he rubbed a little between his hands to warm it then began to massage the worst of the damage. Jack shuddered again, but remained silent whilst James worked the oil first into one scar, then the next, moving gradually down his back until he was just tracing small circles into the warm flesh before him. James had thought that Jack had not quite gotten over his fever when he'd left Port Royal, but apparently he was always just a little warmer than one would expect.

"Have you got anyone who can do this for you?" James asked, still absently tracing the edge of a scar, "The skin will become unyielding otherwise."

Jack huffed softly, "How many folk do you think I know who I'd allow to sit at me back with a pistol at their hip and a dagger in their boot?"

James froze at the words: his hands still on the half naked man in front of him. What in seven hells did he think he was *doing*?

"Is this the part where you have a wee panic?" asked Sparrow, calmly.

James scraped back his chair and stood, horror choking him into silence.

Sparrow shrugged his shirt over his shoulders and turned, hands held out in front him. "How about we have another drink, eh Jamie? That's top stuff I stole for you and I haven't given you the story yet."

James found himself nodding and bent to his task, pouring them two more sloppy glasses of the brandy and pushing one towards Sparrow who had buttoned up and was sitting at a respectable distance again.

"So, we was out in the dead calm of the North Atlantic, no wind for two days and two nights..."

James drank and listened to the story, and then drank some more.

~

He sleepwalked through his duties that week, unable to sleep for twitching at every movement, thinking perhaps that Sparrow had returned. He wasn't sure if it was an idea he hoped for or dreaded.

What he had been thinking was beyond him, he was a Captain of the King's Navy for God's sake: he did not offer comfort to pirates. He was aware that he had cleaned said pirate's wounds and held him upright to piss on a number of occasions, but this had been different. It seemed that it didn't matter where James drew the line in the sand to say, 'I will do this for this man, but no more', he fell further into misconduct each time they came into contact. He would do well to remember that easy was the descent into corruption, and that the task and burden lay in retracing one's steps into the light.

Captain James Norrington was a man of duty and honour and when he bent his mind to a goal it was done. He did not consciously think of Jack Sparrow again.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

James was reading in bed. Well, he was sat in bed with a book that Elizabeth had kindly bought back from London for him, but he was so tired that the letters swam before his eyes. He had been back on shore for nearly a fortnight, but it took him that long to stop jerking awake thinking he had missed the first bells or sure that the reason he could not feel the rocking of the sea was that he had died in his sleep.

He had not had time to visit the Turners beyond the initial welcome home supper they had hosted, where James had nearly fallen asleep in his soup. He was determined to finish this damn book before the next visit, so he could be sure that it was clear how much he appreciated the gift.

He was on the verge of giving up tonight anyhow, as it was late enough that servants had gone for the evening. He leant over to snuff out the lamp by his bed, and if it hadn't been for the dent in the brass handle of the door, he might not have noticed it turning this way and that. James blinked, sure it was a trick of the light, but the door handle moved again and adrenaline had him up, across the room and wrenching it open in a second.

Jack Sparrow knelt before him, lockpick in hand.

The pirate grinned and bounced up from the floor. "Apologies for the lateness, James me lad, I wasn't sure if you would be getting your beauty sleep or not. Not that you need any, of course." He flicked his eyes to James' naked chest as he sauntered into the room.

James wondered if this were perhaps a hallucination brought on by extreme tiredness.

"Sparrow," He began, casting around for his damned robe, "You cannot be here."

"And yet, here I be." He flung both his arms out to the side as if to illustrate the point.

"There are nearly 600 men stationed at Port Royal, three 60 gunners, a *Medway*, a *Bristol* and veritable menagerie of sloops. What could have possibly possessed you to come here?"

“Well, I’m here for the joy of your clever fingers aren’t I? Got no-one else to ease what ails me and I was in the neighbourhood.” He started to remove his waistcoat, whilst James gaped at him for a full half a minute.

“Sparrow...” The man in question was down to his breeches and boots, the latter of which he was in the process of removing. He caught sight of a gold ring piercing one of Sparrow’s brown nipples and shut his mouth with a snap. This was utter madness, and he needed to put a stop to it this instant.

Jack obviously had taken his stunned silence as acceptance, and sprawled himself across the middle of James’s bed accordingly. When James didn’t immediately move, he lifted an arm and made a beckoning gesture without moving his head from the pillow.

He was exhausted. James had managed to not think of the man for months, and now here he was, spread half naked on his own bed. It was so far beyond his experience of the world that he could barely fathom how to do anything else other than what Sparrow apparently wanted him to do.

He shuffled over to his dresser to pick up some fragrant oil, before going back to the bed and settling himself over Jack.

The scars were just as ugly as they had been before: knots of roughed hide that took all of James’ strength to knead into something resembling the elasticity of flesh. He worked in a kind of daze, headless of the time and Jack’s occasional moan or grunt, until he had made his way over each of the deepest scars.

James swept his hands down the arch of Jack’s spine, leaning his weight into the dip above his buttocks where his breeches had ridden down a little. He breathed deeply through his nose, aware that he was shaking but unsure when it had started.

He was also painfully aroused. All Jack need do was look over his shoulder and he would see the depravity of Captain James Norrington. He did not know how he had gotten himself into this situation, or how to get out of it. He curled forward until his braid slipped over his shoulder to almost touch Jack’s shoulder and stayed there, still trembling, trying to think above the clamour in his head.

A warm hand touched his calf, “Lift off Jamie so I can sit up, ay?”

James obediently slid to the side and Jack sat up, close enough that he could see the glint of metal and bone in his hair.

He could not bear to meet Jack's gaze, even when Jack put a hand to his face and tilted his head back so the pirate could press his lips to James's neck, then again to his shoulder, his throat, his cheek. He murmured as he went - *steady Jamie, steady* - until James finally felt able to meet his eyes.

"Ah, there you are." Jack offered him a quick grin, then leaned forward slowly until their lips touched. James leant into the contact, moaning a little as Jack deepened the kiss.

A distant part of himself knew that this was insanity. For all that a quick tumble between two men was seldom remarked upon on a ship, it was something that had never been even the remotest possibility for himself: he had not allowed it to be.

James made a deep, rough sound in his throat as Jack rubbed against his leaking prick. "God, please." The words tore out of him, and Jack rewarded him with a filthy kiss, opening his small clothes and spitting on his hand to ease his grip. James wanted to do the same, he wanted to pull moans and cries from Jack, but he barely had the wherewithal to stay upright. "Jack, Jack please," he begged, hoping to be understood.

"Alright, Jamie, alright my sweet." Jack unbuttoned his own breeches and when he touched James' cock again, it was with his own in hand, so that they rubbed against each other as they moved. It was like nothing he could have imagined. "Kiss me," he demanded, and Jack obeyed.

He kissed Jack until he couldn't anymore, until they were simply sharing breath as they came, one after the other, James barely coherent as Jack pressed a last kiss to the corner of his mouth.

"Got a rag, Jamie? I'll give us a wipe down."

James blinked for a second while he registered the words, then got up on shaking legs to wipe himself clean at the bowl at the foot of the bed, bringing a rung through flannel for Jack to use.

Jack then pulled back the covers and got into the bed, leaning over to snuff out the light.

"You coming in?" He asked, lifting up a corner of James' second best bedsheets.

James got in, trying to hold off the feeling of horror that wanted to drag him down. He had just lain with a man: a pirate. This was not a midnight fantasy, easily blamed on too much wine the night before.

“Shove over a little, Jamie.” Jack threw an arm over James' middle, settling in for the night.

James held a brace of terrible, hateful words behind his teeth: all he could say to drive this man away so that he could delude himself of his worthiness to wear his uniform or to sit in God's house, so he could return to the man he had thought himself to be, not half an hour before.

What he said instead was: “That is not my name, you know.”

“Does it bother you?” Jack asked, genuine curiosity in his voice.

James looked away, afraid his thoughts had been too easily read. “No, not nearly enough as it should.”

~

A man had dropped dead under the mizzenmast at first light and the crew were avoiding the spot as if God himself were going to strike them down. James had little tolerance for superstition at the best of times, but watching the men circle around a main part of the deck for the last eight hours was grinding on his last nerve.

“Lieutenant Fitzwilliam,” James said, addressing the man stood three feet away, having a sharp word with a midshipman, “please accompany me to the stern.”

“Yes, Captain.”

Lieutenant Charles Fitzwilliam was a quiet, fair man, who seemed able to take James' somewhat mercurial moods in his stride. He was also having an affair with the Quartermaster, a detail that may have slipped James' notice before but was now uncomfortably clear to him. He had meant to broach the topic of the relations between the two men on more than one occasion, but each time he had thought of Sparrow's hands in his hair as they'd kissed. If the Lieutenant felt even half of what

he had at that moment, James could not deny him it.

He thought of Theodore, who had returned to England and married a second cousin of the Marquess of Hartington and was well on his way to becoming 'Lord Grove'. Now there was a man who was unlikely to be the cause of an awkward conversation on the appropriateness of sodomising one's Quartermaster.

They walked towards the stern of the ship, discussing minor changes to their course, careful to stop on the exact spot the midshipman had died and point out an imaginary flaw in the topsail. He realised with a shock that some part of him had half expected to die on the spot, as if there were any man on the ship who deserved to be judged by God, then surely it was him. Nevertheless, they made it aft with no issue, and a boy ran over the spot not a minute later, so that was the end of that at least.

"Very good, sir," the Lieutenant commented.

James nodded absently. With the weight of duty upon him it was easy to not think of Jack and the warmth of his skin as he'd slept: he had been gone by morning, and James had rolled into the dip his body had made in the bedding and just lain there for a while.

But here in the freezing spray of the Atlantic, stood next to a man who surely understood some of the same urges, it was difficult not to dwell.

"Sir?" Fitzwilliam asked.

James shook away the thought. "It is nothing, Lieutenant, please return to your post."

Fitzwilliam saluted smartly and made his way back toward the quarterdeck, walking directly under the mizzenmast again as he went, apparently untroubled by the notion of God's divine wrath.

~

Jack appeared in the mirror behind him as James was scraping off the last of the voyage, as if he were stepping from barbarity into civilisation. Or perhaps it was the other way around, he mused as his heart leapt at the sight of the pirate: perhaps it was the savage he was revealing.

He swallowed in a dry throat. "Did you lock the door?" he asked in lieu of a greeting.

Jack showed his teeth in something like a smile, "Perhaps you'd be wanting to finish your shave, Captain?"

James held out the razor. "You do it," he said, and bared his throat. Jack regarded him for a second before taking the razor from him and, with great concentration, sweeping it first with the grain and then against it, revealing swathes of naked skin in its wake.

"I think I like you like this," Jack said after a beat or two of silence.

"What? At your mercy?" James asked with a forced sneer between strokes of the blade.

"No: living without fear," he replied and kissed him.

It was quick and quiet by necessity, James' steward and cook being only a floor away. They sat tangled on the floor afterwards, not even having made it far as the bed. James panted into Jack's shoulder, aware that he should put some distance between them, their embrace seeming more intimate than the pleasure they had just exchanged.

"Will you stay awhile?" James asked the warm skin under his cheek. Jack was rubbing his thumbs in slow circles under his shirt, making it difficult to grasp at the negatives of their association. He was close enough that he felt rather than heard the rumble of Jack's agreement.

"I will dismiss the servants," he stated, without making any move to do so.

After another minute Jack huffed and pressed a brief kiss to the side of James' head before getting to his feet and offering a hand to help him stand. "Up now, afore that gentleman butler of yours comes barging in and we have some fast talking to do."

James allowed himself to be pulled up, only distantly aware of his state of undress as he leant in for a deep kiss. It grew more passionate as Jack bent to bite at the tendon where James' shoulder met his neck, causing James to moan through gritted teeth. Jack chuckled a little in response, "Come on Jamie, go get rid of them downstairs before they come running up to see what ails you."

James blinked himself back to the here and now to find Jack smirking at him. James scowled in answer and tidied himself up with as much dignity as he could and went down to tell his servants they could have the rest of the day off.

Mrs Johnston seemed worried he might starve, but he assured her he was quite well, if not a little tired, and that the cold meat and cheese in the larder would do very well for his supper. Finally they left and James returned upstairs, half afraid that Jack would be gone when he got there.

Of course he was not gone: he was leafing through a selection of letters that he usually kept in the top drawer of his dresser.

James sighed, "If you are looking for evidence of an illicit affair with which to blackmail me then you are perhaps not as bright as I thought."

Jack placed the letters back on the dresser and swaggered over to James, "Bright, eh?"

"Did you or did you not reference a Marcus Aurelius quote not twenty minutes ago? 'It is not death that man should fear, it is never beginning to live.'"

Jack looked a little chagrined at being caught quoting an Roman emperor, then seemed to recover, "It's good for getting into the breeches of fine, upstanding gentleman such as yourself." He added a leer and he leaned further into James' personal space.

James decided it was far too much effort to react to such ridiculousness and reached to carefully hook a finger through the hoop that pierced Jack's left nipple. He tugged a little to bring the other man close enough to kiss but instead spoke directly into Jack's ear, "Well, it seems your ruse has worked, Captain Sparrow."

Jack shivered a little under his hands and turned his head to seek a kiss, which James gladly gave to him.

James was intent on getting to the bed and Jack was intent on relieving him of his clothing. They eventually achieved both goals, and James was set to map every part of the naked skin at his disposal until Jack flipped him onto his back and put his mouth on James' cock: then all his plans were lost at sea. He put a hand in Jack's hair and arched his back, fighting the need to thrust into that wet heat with all the resolve he could muster. Jack chuckled around his mouthful, and James

groaned aloud.

“Jack, Jack,” he chanted, until Jack unbent from his task.

“What do you need, Jamie?”

“Kiss me,” he insisted, and Jack did. It took only a few more rough pulls to his cock and he came, making a mess of them both. James eventually became aware that Jack was still hard against his thigh, and looked up to what was possibly the smuggest expression he had seen on any man.

“Thought I’d killed you for a second there, was going to have a right old time of it explaining it to the Turners, ‘well, you see Lizzie, myself and Captain Norrington were er, wrestling. Yes, wrestling. Naked, o’course, when.....’” Jack yelped as James flipped their positions.

“You are the most uncouth...,” He kissed Jack’s neck, “Ill-mannered...,” his golden hooped nipple, “Indecorous...,” his stomach, “Clodhopping...,” the inside of a bent knee, “Pirate that I have ever had the misfortune to meet.” He looked up at Jack as he hovered over his hard cock, who offered him a half smile rather than the outrageous leer he was expecting, and touched two fingers to James’ cheek.

James held his gaze for a second, then bent to lick and suck at his cock. He tried to take it all in his mouth as Jack had done but had to pull back, coughing a little.

“Steady, Captain.” Jack said, and James fought off a laugh: he could not imagine what he will do the next time someone said something similar to him.

He found his rhythm about the same time as his jaw started to ache, but the power of having Captain Jack Sparrow at his mercy was enough to overcome any discomfort. Jack, for his part, had been reduced to moaning and pleading for James not to stop.

“Ah, yes love, like that...” Jack then put an hand to the side of his face, as if to pull him away. “Jamie, Jamie I...” But James was determined to taste him, and swallowed down as Jack came.

They dozed a little after, Jack snoring softly, until James roused him to see if he wished to eat.

“It is late.”

“Only for those with a bedtime.” Jack replied.

James ignored the comment, saying only that he would get them some supper and putting on his robe to do so.

“And some rum!” Jack half yelled after him.

James took up a bottle of wine and the cheese and bread, to where Jack was still sprawled on his bed. James kicked the door shut behind him and looked around for somewhere to put his burden down, not often being in the habit of entertaining in his bed chamber.

Jack sat up and patted the bed invitingly. James huffed his disapproval but sat down anyway, uncorking the wine and pouring them two generous glasses. Jack toasted him, then drank down half the glass in one go.

“What are we drinking to, Jamie?” he asked.

James paused for a second to think of a goal they could both agree on, “To anchor aweigh, a brisk wind and full sails.”

Jack quirked a half smile and toasted James before tossing back the rest of his wine.

James sipped his more carefully and ate a little whilst Jack helped himself to another glass.

“My Lieutenant is in a relationship with one of the other men,” James found himself confessing.

Jack raised an eyebrow, “Aye?” he said.

“He does not,” James paused to arrange his thoughts, “He does not seem troubled by his choices.”

Jack nodded, “That is freedom, Jamie: the power to live how ye wish to, and to let no man judge you for it.”

“If we all did as we liked there would be chaos.”

“Know that for sure, do you?” Jack asked, curiously.

“Of course. It’s why I try to live by God’s commandments, by the laws of my country.”

Jack laughed, not unkindly, “Don’t you think every nation on earth thinks that their gods have given them special rules to live by?”

James paused, an angry retort at the ready. It was fruitless though, Jack could not see why he struggled with this, why he might be swayed by the lessons he had learnt from the pulpit or the word of English law. Perhaps in the end it was he who was the coward, who could not live for fear of living, and it was Jack who had the way of it.

“Tell me about these other gods.” he requested instead.

Jack looked surprised for a second before smiling, eyes alight. He told James about the Mexican god Huitzilopochtli: warriors who died in battle and women who died in childbirth were honoured to serve him in his halls. He often took the form of a hummingbird: green and blue, the colour of the sea where the beach dropped into deeper waters. Jack talked about how his people paid tribute to him by making a statue in his likeness out of honey and nuts, so that when they had finished long days and nights of praying to him, they each ate a part of the statue thus taking a little of the divine into themselves. When he appeared in his true form he was so bright that his people could only look at him through the arrow holes in their shields: only the bravest could see him clearly.

James was half dozing by the time Jack ran out of words, but he roused himself enough to ask, “So, does the scourge of the Caribbean seas often tell bedtime stories?”

“Shut up and go to sleep,” Jack mumbled, tangling their legs together easily under the sheets.

James woke early as the dawn light was beginning to seep under the drapes.

They disentangled themselves from the sheets and each other and performed their morning rituals in silence, aware they had little time before the servants arrived and the town awoke.

Then they were buttoned up and separate, the length of the room and the roll of the wide ocean between them.

James reached for Jack as Jack was stepping in for an embrace. “You must find me again,” he said.

“Aye,” Jack replied, as serious as James had ever seen him, “I must. I will.” And he cupped his hands around James’ face and kissed him, and then once more, and then he was gone.

Chapter End Notes

Beta'd by [SlumberousTrash](#) (*"Why did you put a random apostrophe in this 'Turners' but not in the others?" "I don't know! I just sprinkle them around and wait for you to come sort them out!"*)

So I am writing a second part to this where they sail off into the sunset and live happily ever after :)

I'm on [Tumblr](#) for incoherent fandom and anarchy; [Twitter](#) for writing updates; [Website](#) for original works.

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